

**Governor's Commission to Review and Advise on Services Related to At-Risk
Adolescent Youth in New Hampshire**

**August 12, 2016
Legislative Office Building
Room 302
Concord, New Hampshire**

DRAFT MINUTES

Commission Members in Attendance: Michael Adamkowski, Karen Crowley, Martha Kane, Michael Skibbie, Mary Steady.

Commission Members Absent: Rep. McKinney, Rep. Desimone, Jeff Meyers, Michele Harlan, Judge Carroll, David Dionne, Karen Purse, Nicole Rodler

Others in attendance: Sherry Levesque (DCYF), Lorraine Bartlett (DCYF), Byry Kennedy (DHHS), John Eriquezzo (NH Residential Provider Network), Karen Cusano (NH Partners in Service), Steven Briden (Governor's Office)

I. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 12:15 am by welcoming members of the Commission and the public in attendance.

II. Approval of Minutes (July 8, 2016)

Chairman Adamkowski asked for a motion to approve the minutes, which was made by Commissioner Skibbie and seconded by Commissioner Steady. The motion was approved unanimously.

III. Presentation:

Gaps in the System/Provider Associations

(John Eriquezzo of the NH Residential Provider Network)

Mr. Eriquezzo talked about the current state of the residential provider network which has seen 12 programs close over the last five years. He attributes some of those closings to the fact that there have been no rate increases for providers for the last ten years, which has stretched their resources very thin. They are also dealing with a serious workforce crisis, which is driving capacity issues. He believes the workforce shortage could be eased if the state allowed them to waive some of the qualifications that workers have to meet. He stated that 47 youth are currently placed out-of-state.

Commissioner Skibbie attempted to get specific clarification on the gaps in service and asked for particular information on the types of services that are needed, but not provided. Mr. Eriquezzo stated that closing the smaller facilities sends kids to larger facilities that don't have ability to help them the

way they need to be helped. The providers feel like they are getting kids that they don't have the ability to help, which results in kids being passed around between providers. He could not provide any specific numbers and suggested that DCYF should have information.

(Karen Cusano of NH Partners in Service)

Ms. Cusano spoke about how the lessening of available resources and increase in needs has affected private providers. She identified gaps in the system in regard to home support for crisis intervention, short-term stabilization programming, quick assessment and medication management. She said too many kids end up in the hospital for these things. There is also a significant lack of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and mental health treatment options for kids. Without intervention, they end up in the justice system. Mostly they have to rely on general pediatricians for assistance, as opposed to specialists.

She stated that ideally she would want to see 1:3 ratios of kids to workers at private providers, however NH rates make that difficult. She said the reimbursement rates in NH are much lower than in surrounding states, which makes it difficult to retain staff as they can't offer competitive pay. She also thinks there are going to be huge issues with the new Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) interpretation from the President that requires overtime pay for certain salaried workers. They already have a 57% turnover rate for nurses and hiring professional staff is a huge challenge.

Commissioner Skibbie asked about the issues regarding Substance Use Disorder treatment and any discussions that had occurred with DCYF. Ms. Cusano stated that they had worked on a frameworks program with DCYF and Director Bartlett stated that she would try to locate any written materials that were created as a result of the frameworks discussion on barriers to service.

Commissioner Skibbie also inquired about the FLSA issue mentioned by Ms. Cusano, but she stated that they haven't broken down the data yet to see exactly how much it will cost them.

**Rates for Community Based Providers
(Byry Kennedy, DHHS)**

Mr. Kennedy passed out language that appeared in the trailer bill (HB2) that specifically capped the reimbursement rates at 2015 levels. He also stated that the same language has been in all trailer bills since 2012.

Commissioner Skibbie wanted to know to what extent the impact of the failure to raise rates on services was brought to the attention of the appropriators. Specifically he wanted any written materials that were provided. Mr. Kennedy stated that he did not know if there were any written

materials produced, but he did state that the department requested a 2% increase in the last budget and a 5% increase in the budget before. Commissioner Skibbie reiterated that he wanted to see any written materials that were created by the department in regards to provider rate increases for the last two budgets. Director Bartlett stated that she would find any documents produced by the department to justify those increases.

**Broad Themes from Individual Cases – DHHS
(Lorraine Bartlett, Director of DCYF)**

Director Bartlett distributed information to the Commission members including information on certified and enrolled providers, as well as cost data for 17 year olds. The data was not discussed during the meeting. She will distribute copies electronically to Commission members through Amy Kennedy after the meeting.

(Sherry Levesque, DCYF Bureau Administrator)

Ms. Levesque explained the Case Practice Review process. They perform the review four times a year and draw themes from the raw data to create improvement plans.

Commissioner Skibbie asked how they track placement stability and what data they can look at to see how it is tracking over time. Ms. Levesque stated that the goal is to only have one placement per child, and anything over that number is not a strength. She also said she would provide the placement stability results from 2011-today, which she considers an apple to apple comparison.

The Commissioners and Ms. Levesque had a conversation about the “Least Restrictive/Most Appropriate” placement standards that tried to clarify what that currently means. They also discussed the idea of having a general screening for all children before they enter the system.

Ms. Levesque also discussed that some of the outcomes that are covered in the Case Practice Review and explained that there is federal data that you can use to see how New Hampshire stacks up against some other states. She offered to distribute this website by email to the Commission members.

(John Eriquezzo)

Mr. Eriquezzo wanted to let the Commission know that he has individuals who have examined the FLSA changes regarding overtime, and he believes that the changes can be absorbed without cost and while providing better services.

Motion to Adjourn

Chairman Adamkowski entertained a motion to adjourn, which was made by Commissioner Crowley and Seconded by Commissioner Steady. The vote was unanimous in favor of adjournment.

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